

Pentateuch

III Structure

The structure of the Pentateuch is built around the origin of the world and of the nations of mankind (Gen. 1-11), the Patriarchs (Gen. 12-50), Moses and the Exodus from Egypt (Ex. 1-18), the special revelation given by God from Sinai for His covenant people (Ex. 19-40), the way of approach to a holy God by a sinful, yet chosen people (Lev. 1-17) and the walk for approval by a holy God (Lev. 18-27), the last events and laws at Sinai (Num 1.1-10.10), the journey from Sinai to the plains of Moab (Num.10.11-22.1), events in the plains of Moab (Num.22.2-36.13), and last discourses of Moses and his death (Deut. 1-34).

The order in which these five chapters of the one book of the Pentateuch stand is the order of experience through which the people of God in all ages pass. Genesis, the book of beginnings, tells of the origin of life, sin, and death. It begins with primitive history and proceeds through patriarchal history. Exodus, which neither begins nor ends the history of the children of Israel, is concerned with the theme of redemption not just for the individual or the family but for the nation as well. A redeemed people find the laws governing their worship, sacrifice, and service through the appointed priesthood in the book of Leviticus. In Numbers we come to realize that stage of experience which characterizes the people of God in their march through the hostile environment of the world on their way to God's promised possession. Finally, Deuteronomy with its historical, prophetic and practical outlook shows to Israel and to all the world the value of obedience and the results of disobedience in the life of a people who have been redeemed and must shortly move on in to possess their promised inheritance.